

Remarks:

Claims 1-8, 11-30 and 33-48 were rejected over prior art, while claims 9, 10, 31 and 32 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were found to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 9 and 31 depended directly from independent claims 1 and 23, while claims 10 and 32 depended respectively from claims 9 and 31. Rather than rewriting claims 9 and 31 in independent form, they have been incorporated into their respective parent claims 1 and 23, with claims 9 and 31 canceled. The remaining claims which depended directly or indirectly from claims 1 and 23 have been retained, since they all now incorporate the subject matter of claims 9 or 31. Claims 10 and 32 have been amended to depend respectively from amended claims 1 and 23, rather than canceled claims 9 and 31. Independent claims 19 and 43 have also been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of canceled claims 9 and 31, and accordingly should be allowable along with their respective dependent claims 20-22 and 44-48.

The substance of amended claims 1 and 23 is identical to that of original claims 9 and 31. Since no narrowing amendments have been made with respect to originally presented claims and the amendment is purely one of form, no limitations to the literal and equivalent scope of these claims should be imputed.

The amendments to claims 1 and 23 are being made for the purpose of having a patent issued promptly, and are

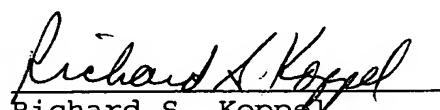
Appl. No. 10/608,731  
Amdt. Dated Oct. 26, 2004  
Reply to Office action of Sept. 2, 2004

not concessions of unpatentability for these claims or their rejected dependent claims in their original form. Applicants reserve the right to file a continuation application on any rejected claims.

All of the claims are in proper form for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: 10/27/04

  
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